

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 183457

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC FROM TOKYO 07 SEP 73:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 11545

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF CU JA

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ASYLUM BY CUBAN NATIONAL

1. MFA INFORMS US THAT ON 7 SEPT AT 0430 HOURS
CUBAN SEAMAN, JOSE RAUL BERENGUER CASANOVA RODRIGUEZ
(SUBJECT) DPOB 13 SEPTEMBER 46 HAVANA, JUMPED SHIP
IN YOKOHAMA HARBOR AND WAS PICKED UP BY HARBOR POLICE,
WHO INTERVIEWED HIM. SUBJECT CLAIMED HAD LEFT SHIP
BECAUSE HAD COME UNDER SUSPICION OF OTHER CREW MEMBERS
AND WAS IN PHYSICAL DANGER BECAUSE OF POLITICAL VIEWS,
GIST OF WHICH ARE THAT CUBAN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS DIRECT
RESULT OF DETERIORATION OF CUBAN POLITICAL SYSTEM.
SUBJECT TOLD POLICE THAT HE WANTS SEEK POLITICAL ASYLUM
IN THE U.S.

2. POLICE REPORTED TO MFA THAT THE CAPTAIN AND QTE
SECRETARY GENERAL UNQTE (PROBABLY POLITICAL OFFICER) OF
SUBJECT'S SHIP REQUESTED PERMISSION ON 7 SEPTEMBER TO
GO TO CUBAN EMBASSY IN TOKYO, PRESUMABLY TO DISCUSS THIS
CASE. SUBJECT CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN POLICE SAFE
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HOUSE IN YOKOHAMA, AND IS BEING INTERROGATED FURTHER.

MFA OFFICIAL ALSO DEBRIEFING HIM, IN EFFORT CONFIRM THE INFORMATION HE HAS PROVIDED ABOUT HIMSELF, WHICH IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. EDUCATION. SUBJECT GRADUATE OF DE LA SALLE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN HAVANA, OF HAVANA MILITARY ACADEMY, OF QTE PRE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION UNQTE OF HAVANA, UNIVERSITY OF HAVANA, AND NAVAL ACADEMY AT MARIEL.

B. EMPLOYMENT. SUBJECT IS QUALIFIED AS MATE FOR CARGO VESSELS. WORKED AUGUST 1970 TO JUNE 71 AS CADET ON CARGO SHIPS, FROM THEN UNTIL JAN 72 AS THIRD MATE, FROM THEN UNTIL AUGUST 72 AS SECOND MATE, AND HAS HAD FIRST MATE POSITION SINCE. WAS FIRST MATE AND ASSISTANT CAPTAIN ON CUBAN CARGO SHIP QTE BAIRE UNQTE WHEN JUMPED SHIP.

C. SUBJECT HAS HAD NO MILITARY CAREER. HE IS NOT A COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER.

D. LANGUAGES. SUBJECT CLAIMS TO SPEAK FLUENT SPANISH, ENGLISH, PORTUGUESE, GERMAN, ITALIAN AND FRENCH.

E. FAMILY. FATHER IS JOSE RAUL BERENGUER, WHO IN 1928 WAS CUBAN DELEGATE TO LEAGUE OF NATIONS. IN 1940 WAS DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL FOR CUBAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE, IN 1945 WAS DIRECTOR OF DIPLOMATIC LIBRARY, IN 1948 DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF STATE, AND IN 1960 AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA. FATHER NOW RETIRED AND LIVING IN CUBA. MOTHER IS DALIA RODRIGUEZ CASANOVA, AGE 65, STILL LIVES IN CUBA. ELDER HALF BROTHER IS JOSE DE LA PAZ JUDITH DILON, AGE FORTY WHO SERVED CUBAN CONSULATE IN NEW YORK CITY FROM 1948-60 WHEN HE SOUGHT AND RECEIVED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN U.S. HIS ADDRESS IS 23 STERLING STREET, SOMMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS. SISTER DALIA DE LA PAZ, AGE 19, LIVES IN NEW YORK CITY. AUNT IS MARIA DE LA CARMEN RODRIGUEZ CASANOVA, AGE 64, PREVIOUSLY WORKED AT CUBAN CONSULATE IN U.S., SOUGHT AND RECEIVED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN U.S., NOW LIVES IN WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA.

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F. SUBJECT ASSERTS HE NOT UNDER ANY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION.

3. SUBJECT'S SHIP, QTE BAIRE UNQTE, ARRIVED YOKOHAMA OUTER PORT 26 AUGUST, AFTER VOYAGE FROM HAVANA TO HAIPHONG AND NORTH KOREA. WILL REMAIN IN YOKOHAMA UNTIL LATE SEPTEMBER, THEN LEAVES FOR VANCOUVER AND HAVANA.

4. SUBJECT CARRYING ONLY HIS SEAMAN'S CARD, NO. 4001, ISSUED 21 DECEMBER 72. HE LEFT HIS CUBAN PASSPORT, NO. 018254, ON BOARD SHIP.

5. SUBJECT STATES THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEEK POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE U.S., AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO JOIN HIS HALF BROTHER IN MASSACHUSETTS.

6. CUBAN EMBASSY APPROACHED MFA AT 1630 SEPT 7 TO INQUIRE ABOUT SUBJECT. MFA VERIFIED THAT SUBJECT HAD SOUGHT REFUGE WITH JAPANESE AUTHORITIES AND THAT POLICE ARE HOLDING HIM. CUBAN EMBASSY ASKED NOTHING FURTHER AND MFA VOLUNTEERED NOTHING.

7. THERE HAVE BEEN NO INQUIRIES SO FAR FROM THE PRESS.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO RESPOND TO SUBJECT'S REQUEST FOR ASYLUM IN U.S. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, GOJ WILL NOT CONSIDER GRANTING ASYLUM TO SUBJECT HERE, BUT IS WILLING KEEP HIM IN CUSTODY FOR REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME UNTIL ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE. SHOESMITH UNQUOTE RUSH

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